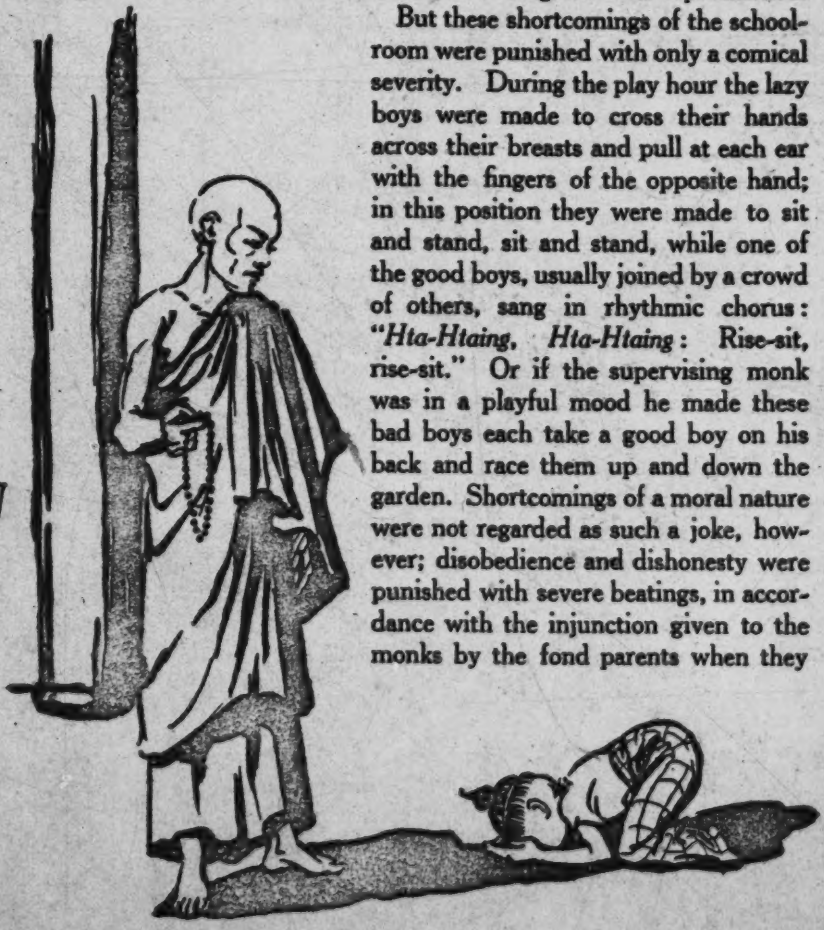
872 next to their friends, crouched over their work and started to shout out
859 whatever passage was being committed to memory. My father's chuckling
876 was at being able to remember how his voice was lustier than his rival's as he rested on his elbows and knees, and rocked backwards and forwards in rhythm to his chanting, with his legs going as high as he dared, giving surreptitious kicks and nudges to upset the balance of his similarly rocking rival, shouting out the passages all wrong when the supervising monk was at the other end of the room and could not distinguish his voice in the general din, so as to cause his rival to laugh and be reprimanded.



But these shortcomings of the schoolroom were punished with only a comical severity. During the play hour the lazy boys were made to cross their hands across their breasts and pull at each ear with the fingers of the opposite hand; in this position they were made to sit and stand, sit and stand, while one of the good boys, usually joined by a crowd of others, sang in rhythmic chorus: "*Hta-Htaing, Hta-Htaing*: Rise-sit, rise-sit." Or if the supervising monk was in a playful mood he made these bad boys each take a good boy on his back and race them up and down the garden. Shortcomings of a moral nature were not regarded as such a joke, however; disobedience and dishonesty were punished with severe beatings, in accordance with the injunction given to the monks by the fond parents when they handed their children over: "*So yin na na yaik pa:* If he is naughty please beat him hard."

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792 My father spent about five years like this. The hair of his top-knot grew longer year by year and it was nearing the time when he should cut

it off, offer it to his mother as a tress for her hair-dressing, and have his head shaved and be initiated into the monkhood amidst feasting and rejoicing. This initiation, which every Buddhist boy went through in order to attain his true manhood by wearing the yellow robe, would last only a week or a month, or as long as my father felt the urge to remain in the monastery; for ever if he liked, in which case he would be formally received as an upasin. It was expected, however, that he would leave after a few months and help Grandmother and the aunts with looking after the paddy and the gardens. A rain of accidents upset all these schemes.

When my father was about 14 he was already among the oldest boys in the kyauug, his learning was high and his conduct exemplary. The monks gave him the task of guarding the meat-safe where all the stores of sweetmeats given to the monastery were kept, as well as delicious titbits like the roe of *nga-tha-lauk* fish, and the rich red oil of the heads of lobsters, which were kept over for the meals of the monks on following days. These wire-netted cupboards are called "cat-houses" in Burmese, because they are meant to guard the food from depredations of cats, and they serve the purpose very well, but they could never guard against the appetites of little boys; for my father, even as I knew him in later years, loved people to eat good things and would always soften and allow his companions to have a bit just here and there. He was often scolded for it, but was so well-behaved otherwise that the post was not taken from him. Just at this time, however, a supervising monk with very decided ideas of discipline was given charge of the boys; all the faults of disobedience, telling of falsehoods, running off to the village at forbidden hours and such like, were stored up till the end of the month. Then, on punishment day, the monk would gather a pile of sticks beside him, and all the boys with faults in a row before him, and go through beating them, one stick to one boy until it broke. One month my father was included in this row because the inroads on the meat-safe stores had increased in spite of constant warnings. Being a big boy he was left to the end of the row, and could watch the zealous monk methodically working through the boys and the sticks. What we know of my father and physical pain is that my mother was once scolded very severely the only time in her life that she beat any of us, and that he himself, when about to take nasty medicine or a vaccination, would go through a series of shiverings and comical protests, some of which I am sure were quite genuine. My poor father then watched the pile of sticks diminishing, and when there were but three sticks left and three boys between him and the untiring monk he suddenly took to his heels and fled, right out of the monastery grounds, down the pagoda hill and down to the creek. He did not dare

872 to go home because Grandmother would have sent him back for a double
792 beating, so he hitched up his longyi, tied his shirt round his head and
861 swam across the stream. One of the huts on the other bank belonged to
a woman who had always been very fond of him because she believed
[775] him to be a reincarnation of her brother who had died in childhood;
Burmese Buddhists believe that one goes through many existences on this
earth, and sometimes children are born who have not yet forgotten their
previous existence by the time they can talk; they adopt habits uncannily
like those of the departed member who, the fond and grieving relatives
hope, has returned to them in the guise of this new child; they say "My
bed", "My clothes" to the possessions of the dead person, especially if
eggs are not included in their diet, the belief being that eggs cause them
to forget. When we were very young, the fame of a wonder child, who
could recite the most learned religious passages untaught, spread through-
out Burma, and my parents travelled to hear him; he had been a monk
in his past existence and could remember.

792 My father's case was no outstanding one like this; he had just re-
● 561 sembled the lady's brother in looks and gesture, and a few childish utter-
ances helped out by her belief had endeared my father to her as having
been *winsa* (come in and inhabited) by her brother. The good and fond
lady received the boy with open arms, agreed that he was getting too old
for the monastery, and promised to go over and plead with my grand-
mother to take him out now and hasten his initiation ceremony into the
priesthood. This was achieved and my father went back to his mother's
house and prepared for the *shinbyu* as the ceremony was called.

484 The manner of his exit from the monastery, however, had made
177 him restless. During the short period he was free, he could go where
874 he willed, and in this way he often met traders who came and went be-
tween Ye and Tavoy, a seaport town about 100 miles away, to which
passenger and cargo ships from Moulmein made regular trips. One
day he was at the house on the opposite bank when a boy he used to know
as a toddler returned from Tavoy after a trip to Moulmein. This boy
could speak a few words of English. Moreover, he wore his hair in a
boha-dauk (a Westerner's crop) and seemed to think my father a jungle
boy. All the restlessness in my father flowed over then, because up to
now he had always felt himself clever and ahead of other boys. He
worried Grandmother to let him go to Moulmein and learn English, and
and get a job with the government which would bring them hundreds of
rupees each month. Other families who considered that Grandmother
had clever sons agreed that this would be a good idea; though none of
them had been to Moulmein and my father was still a boy, it would not
be so daring an adventure as it sounded, because there was some one

the sameik by using an unoiled dry and slightly wavy tress to offer a wanton contrast to the smooth severe cylinder. In the absence of permanent waving, and with the straightness of the Burmese hair, I admired the enterprise of a Rangoon family who subsidized, with supplies of coconut oil, the Indian gardener next door, an Oriya coming from a race with wavy raven locks, until his tresses grew to the requisite length and they bought them for binding into a sameik. This sameik is discarded after marriage, but in the case of a girl who does not get married early, it continues in a more restrained form, a *sameik-kwin*, when it is tucked back into the bottom of the cylinder to form a loop. Shortly after the age of twenty-five, she discards it altogether and makes just a sadone like a married woman. Kyi-Kyi's sadone was broad and low; after she had finished the rest of her toilet she tied her hair by drawing a thread backwards from her forehead so that stray hairs were tucked into the sadone, and the same with the upswept hair at the back. She also carried the Burmese powder puff in her luggage though I never saw her use it. These, which we also still use as the best means of applying Max Factor powder, were scraps of old cotton vests, about ten inches square, which had been soaked and washed in thanakha, thus avoiding the horrible newness of the unused modern powder puff.

My aunt's clothes were also aggressively her own. This was noticeable especially with her going-out clothes, for which she would never have any imported materials. She declared that imported silks, crêpe-de-chines and the like, could not be washed and beaten clean like the Burmese silks and cottons. Neither did they produce suitable colours and designs for elderly spinster ladies like her—they were either gay and skittish, or of a soberness that depressed without pleasing one. What she loved most were the *ya-khaing* longyis, silks and cottons woven in Arakan, in small check patterns, but so stout that you soaked them and beat them hard before the first wearing, and then washed them again and again until you had a pliant closely-woven fabric whose colour and freshness lasted a lifetime. One of my sisters, whom my aunt pressed to wear a ya-khaing longyi in preference to a crêpe-de-chine piece whose bright butterflies had appealed to her sixteen-year-old fancy, stated that no doubt if she slept in the ya-khaing longyi every night for seven years, it would just be at its best for her to wear when she reached the age of twenty-five. For more dressy occasions, my aunt wore *zin-mè* silks, the design of which was reputed to come from Chiengmai in Siam, and in imitation of which Burmese weavers now produce zin-mè longyis in dull red and green geometrical designs, like old lacquer colours. Kyi-Kyi sometimes wore *Bangauk* longyis also, said to come truly from Bangkok, but more often woven in Burma in imitation of the characteristic twist

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871 able rule, when a boy has reached the age of eight or nine years he goes as a matter of course to the Pôngyi Kyaung. 871 It is open to all alike—to the poor fisherman's son as well 212 as to the scion of princely blood—for no one pays anything, 792 and it is not carefully considered who it is that fills the ● 561 monkish begging pots in the daily round. Thus every Buddhist boy in the country is taught to read and write, and in this respect at least there are but very few illiterate Burmans. This primary education must by no means be confounded with entry into the monastery as a koyin-gale, or novice. Strictly speaking, this ceremony ought not to take place before the age of fifteen, and the earlier sojourn is only a preparation for it. The younger pupils may become boarders in the monastic building if they choose, but they do not assume the yellow robe, which marks them, for however short a time it may be worn, as members of the Assembly of the Perfect. They wear their ordinary clothes and retain their secular name.

816 As soon as the boy enters the monastery he is set down 812 in the big schoolroom beside all the other boys, and receives a roughly-made black wooden slate. On this are written a few of the letters, perhaps the whole of the alphabet. A little explanation starts him off, and for the next few days he is engaged in shouting out their sounds at the top of his voice. Nobody minds him, for all the other scholars are similarly engaged in hallooing, and the monks derive a sense of comfort and a virtuous consciousness of doing good from the noise. It is as soothing as the sound of his mill-wheels to the miller, or the roar of traffic to the cockney. If a boy stops shouting, it is a sign that he has stopped working—and if he is not meditating mischief, it is probable that he is about to go to sleep, and he is corrected accordingly. The method is an admirable one for keeping the boys occupied—much more so than civilised Western methods—though I fear a council of English head-masters would scout the idea. The casual foreign observer who goes about taking notes, like Grose or the "Rampant M.P.," passes the ecclesiastical school, and in amazement at the seeming uproar within, declares that monastery schools are hopelessly badly conducted, and without the semblance of discipline. As a

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There is a percentage of thirty-five in the "middle standard" (Government Education Department). What matters if the successful halt and stumble in the pareit-gyi? There are two boys who have a chance in the Calcutta University Matriculation Examinations. It is a matter of indifference that the thingyo is as unknown to them as it is to any poor foreigner. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their shortcomings in this respect, there are but few even of these young Burmans who have not become members of the society, if only for long enough to get their heads shaved and be invested with the yellow dress. Still in these latter years there are a few who have never gone through even this slight ceremony, and the number may be expected annually to increase as Western habits spread more widely over the country. Not till the monastic schools begin to be deserted will the Christian missionary find that his labours have had any effect on the vital energies of the ancient faith of the Buddha. That day is still far off. As yet the government and vernacular lay schools have had very little effect in reducing the number of scholars who go daily to study in the dim-lighted schoolrooms of the monastery. Not even in Rangoon have the monks to call for scholars; they flock there abundantly of their own accord.

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CHAPTER III

BUDDHIST BAPTISM

THE term baptism as applied to a youth who enters a monastery in the state of probation (called shin) is not, as many people think, a mere idle analogy borrowed from the Christian faith. The novice actually and formally receives a new name to mark his accession to the full dignity of humanity. The great majority of shins, or ko-yins, are little boys of twelve or a little older, but occasionally a man secludes himself from the world at an advanced age. Till a Buddhist has entered the fraternity he cannot claim to be more than a mere animal. He has a lu nāmé, it is true, a worldly name, but so might any ox, or horse, or elephant. It is not till he has subjected himself to the discipline of the kyaung that he can reap the fruits of a holy past and look forward to a more glorious future.

> The devils in the underworlds wear out
> Deeds that were wicked in an age gone by.

Man has less innocence than the animals, and cannot, like them, progress by merely omitting to sin. He may make golden stairways of his weaknesses indeed, but before he can do so he must abandon the world, if it is only for twenty-four hours. Then he becomes an upathaka, a believer, and towards another life will hold the gain as well as answer for the loss in the present one, death casting up the debit or credit.

> Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
> And sink it lower than the worm or gnat.

In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops

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Lower Burma

792 In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops
553 his secular name and receives a bwè, an honorific title, to
775 mark that it is now open to him to escape from suffering.
561 The name lapses when he returns to the world again, but it is sufficient that he has once borne it. He may now add to his kan, merit, and gain for himself a glorious new life by good works.

[198] This is what is meant by calling the ceremony a baptism. The bwè are almost invariably Pali, or Burmanised Pali names, and follow the same rules with regard to initial letters as the lu nāmé. Thus a Maung Po Myat, born on Thursday, might take the name of Pyinya-Zawta, while the bwè of a Sunday child, Maung An, would be Adesa. This religious or Buddhist (on the analogy of Christian) name is, of course, retained by the regular members of the monastery, and a monk is never addressed by any other when a name is used at all. When he becomes old a U is added, as U Adesa, but it must not be forgotten that [576] the use of a person's name in addressing him is considered very far from being polite in Burma, especially to one of rank and dignity such as a mendicant. On the other hand, one who has returned to the world never uses the bwè, not even when he accomplishes some great religious work such as the foundation of a pagoda, which according to a comforting belief ensures passage to Ne'ban after death.

The entry into the monastic order is therefore certainly the most important event in the life of a Burman, since only under the robe of the recluse and in the abandonment of the world can he completely fulfil the law and hope to find the way to eventual deliverance from the misery of ever-recurring existences. [796] The popular time for the ceremony is just at the beginning of Wā, the Buddhist Lent, which lasts from July to October, roughly speaking. Strict Buddhists make their sons stay throughout the whole Wā. During that season feasts, though they do occur, are very much discountenanced, and dramatic performances are energetically denounced by the religious.

792 According to the letter of the law the intending proba-
561 tioners should have reached the age of fifteen, but this
184 regulation has almost entirely lapsed in Lower Burma,
177.84 among other reasons chiefly because that is just the most

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important age for the boy to be learning English and arithmetic, with a view to getting situations under Government or in English merchants' offices. Therefore in the vast majority of cases shin-pyu thi takes place at the age of twelve, or perhaps even a year earlier.

If the boy has been a scholar in the monastery beforehand, he is sure to be already prepared in all that is required of him. If not, he gets a few hasty lessons in the duties that will be incumbent on him. He must address a full member of the order in such and such language; he must walk decorously through the streets, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground six feet before him, and on no account gaze round him, no matter what exciting events may be going on; he must wear his thingan and du-gut in the prescribed fashion; he must eat with dignity and circumspection, and so on. All these details are set forth in most minute fashion in a code. When he has mastered the most essential portions, and has also given proof of an acquaintance with the ordinary forms of worship, all is ready. His horoscope now comes into requisition, and a bedinsayā or Ponna is called in to determine a lucky day and hour from the sadā. When this has been settled, three or four girls, the intending koyin-gale's sisters, or friends of the family, dress themselves up in their finest silks and jewels—often borrowing a large quantity of the latter—and go round the town, announcing to all relatives, friends, and neighbours when the induction will take place, and inviting them to the feast, presenting the little packet of le'-pet usual on such occasions. Almost all of these send some little present, either of money or victuals, to aid in the feast and make it as grand as possible. Not unseldom, if somebody else's son is also going to enter the kyaung and the town is not very large, the two join forces, while occasionally as many as half a dozen unite, especially if the families are not well off.

On the appointed day the young neophyte dresses in his finest clothes, and loads himself with all the family gold chains and jewellery, and as much more as he can borrow for the occasion. He then mounts a pony or gets into a richly decorated car. Shaded by gold umbrellas, allowed formerly on this occasion only in Upper Burma, except to those who had got a special patent for them from the sovereign...

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had got a special patent for them from the sovereign, he passes at a foot-pace through the village. A band of music goes before; all his friends and relatives crowd round him decked in their gayest; the young men dancing and singing vigorously; the girls laughing and smiling, with powdered faces and brilliant dresses. Thus he goes in succession to the houses of his relations and of all the local officials, to do them the obeisance due from a younger member of the family, and to bid them farewell. They in turn contribute money towards the expense of the band, and the solace of the supernumeraries. This triumphant march is meant to symbolise the maung-shin's abandonment of the follies of this world, and to recall Prince Theidat's last splendid appearance in Kapilawut, amidst a crowd of rejoicing clansmen and subjects, just previous to his abandonment of family and kingdom to become a homeless mendicant ascetic, and to obtain the Buddhaship under the bawdi tree. When the round of visits has been duly carried out, the procession turns back to the parents' house, where in the meantime the final preparations for the induction and subsequent feast have been concluded. The head of the kyaung to which the young postulants are to be admitted, together with several of his brother monks, are seated at the back of the room on a raised dais, in front of which are ranged the presents intended for the mendicants—heaps of fruit, cooked food, mats, yellow cloth, and so on. The "Talapoins" seated in a row carefully hold up the large lotus-leaf-shaped fans before their faces to shut out from view the female portion of the assemblage. Never is the command to the holy community not to look on woman more necessary and more arduous to observe than at a shin-pyu pwè. Burma's fairest daughters are assembled, bright in rainbow skirts and neckerchiefs, drowsy-scented flowers in the jetty tresses, jewellery flashing on the bosom, the fingers, and ears, the fragrance of thana'ka lingering over the smiling faces. Terrible trial it is for the young monk, if any such there be in the gaing ôk's following, and more imperative the concentration of the mind on the Payeit Gyi and other portions of the sacred writ which are loudly chanted as the postulants return, and the assembly shikhoes to the pon-

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gyis, and settles down to observe the proceedings. The boy throws off all his fine clothes and jewellery, and binds a piece of white cloth round his loins. Then his long hair is cut off close to the head. Often the locks are as much as three or four feet long, and are carefully preserved by the mother or sister, the latter often making them up into ta-su, the tails of hair twisted in with her own to increase the size of her sa-dôn—the knot of hair she wears at the back of her head. When the hair has been cut, the head is carefully shaved, the boy holding it over a cloth held by some of his relations. After this the head is washed in the usual way with a decoction of the seeds and bark of the kin-bôn thi, and rubbed well with saffron. A bath is then taken, and once more he puts on the bright paso, and repairs to the presence of the monks. Near at hand the parents have set ready the thingan, belt, ko-wut, and other yellow robes, the begging-pot and other requisites of the shin. The boy comes forward, prostrates himself three times, raises his hands joined in reverence, and begs, in a Pali formula got up by heart, to be admitted to the Holy Assembly as a neophyte, that he may walk steadily in the path of perfection, enjoy the advantages which result therefrom, and finally attain to the blessed state of Ne'ban. The kyaung po-go with his own hands gives him the garments; he is duly robed; the thabeit is hung round his neck by the strap, and then it is announced formally that he is a member of the monastery. He falls in among the other novices who have come with the mendicants. The abbot perhaps exhorts the assemblage for a short time, and then rising while all the people do obeisance, walks off slowly to the monastery, whither the newly-appointed ko-yins follow him, not unlikely helping to carry the presents which have been given at their induction.

The feast at the parents' house begins immediately, and of course ends in a pwè, which lasts till dawn. Sometimes, though this is very seldom the case even in Rangoon, the young probationer comes back again the same night and assumes the lay dress. This *pro forma* observance of the ceremony of baptism is, however, vehemently opposed by all the monks who are worth anything. A few boys

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remain only twenty-four hours in the yellow dress, long enough to enable them to go once at least round the village begging from door to door in the train of the yahans. This, naturally, is very little better than leaving the kyaung immediately. It is considered hardly decent for the shin to leave under seven days of professed membership of the community. Some stay longer—a fortnight, a month, or two months; but all the more earnest believers insist that their sons shall remain at least one Wā, throughout the four months of Lent, in the rainy season. The best course for a fervent Buddhist, who nevertheless does not feel himself adapted for a monkish life, is to stay over three Wās, one Lent for his father, one for his mother, and one for himself. It is on account of the importance of the Wā to the shin-pyu that most inductions take place at the beginning of that season. Yahans count their seniority by the number of Lents they have spent in the kyaung. A mendicant of twenty Wās must shekho to one of twenty-five, and so on. An individual who has left the holy community to re-enter the world is called a lu-twet, a runaway. On the other hand, a man who has been married, and has afterwards entered the monastery, goes by the name of taw-twet, one who has fled from the jungle of the world. The most revered yahans are those who have held steadfastly by the blameless, austere life of the fraternity since the time when they were first admitted as koyin-gale. Such are called ngè-byu, white, or stainless from youth, and if they attain to advanced age are always sure of a most splendid ceremonial funeral, whether they have been celebrated for piety and learning or not.

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If the shin-pyu stays on in the kyaung, he continues the same course of studies as he began as a scholar. If he has not already learnt the Payeit Gyi and the Paya Shikho, Pali sermons and forms of worship, or the Mingala Thut, the "Buddhist Beatitudes," he applies himself to them now. The most advanced pore over the metaphysical mysteries of the Abidhamma Konit-gyan, the seven books of the most difficult part of the Bitaghat. These, with the Thingyo and Thadda, afford ample room for consideration to the longest life. The modern system of shortened sojourn in the

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religious are merely initiated into a higher stage, and become members of an order in which every individual is aiming at a greater degree of sanctity. The doors of the kyaung are always open as well to those who wish to enter as to those who wish to leave it. The longest stayer has the greatest honour. A visitor monk, who has the greater number of wās, who has passed many lenten seasons in his yellow robe, will be shikho'd to, will receive the homage of the head of the monastery, even if he be a gaing-ôk, and the stranger but a simple pôngyi.

In his ordination, therefore, the pyin-sin takes upon himself no burden in the shape of a cure of souls. He is not a priest like the Christian minister, who undertakes to guide others to salvation. He has no trouble for his food; a pious and kindly population supplies him far beyond his requirements, and expects no service in return for this support. He has no sermons to prepare; it is not expected that he will preach the law, and when of his own accord he occasionally does give an exposition, it is not any feeble excogitation of his own, but the thoughts and words of the Great Master himself, or of the highest and noblest of the men of old, that he delivers. His natural rest is never broken in upon by calls to administer consolation and comfort to the sick and the dying. Even his leisure is seldom interrupted to be present at the last rites for the dead. He is not a minister of religion, and all he has to do is to seek his own deliverance and salvation. All that is compulsory on him is the observance of continence, poverty, and humility, with tenderness to all living things, abstraction from the world, and a strict observance of a number of moral precepts, all tending to inculcate these things. It is curious perhaps, therefore, that greater numbers do not don the yellow robe. As it is, however, there is no lack of them.

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Previous to admission the postulant must have reached the age of twenty years and have obtained his parents' permission. The origin of this stipulation dates from the earliest times. When Gautama attained the Buddhaship his half-brother Nanda was next heir, and was about to be proclaimed Crown Prince when he was persuaded to become yahan. Thereupon Thudaw-dana, the king, obtained a

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561 promise from the Buddha that ever after none should put on the celibate robe without his parents' consent. The candidate must also give proof of a sufficient knowledge of the Pareit-gyi, the Padiseit, the three Bitaghats, and the like. When it is understood that he has given satisfaction in these subjects, his friends provide for him the complete equipment of a mendicant, the sacred eight utensils which a pyin-sin cannot do without. These are:—

[292] 1. The dugôt, a piece of yellow cloth of rectangular shape, folded many times and worn over the left shoulder, with the ends hanging down behind and before.

2. The kowut, a piece of cloth worn round the loins and reaching to the ankles.

3. The thinbaing, a square-shaped cloth, yellow like the others, thrown cloak-fashion over the chest and shoulders, and coming down as far as the knees.

[293] 4. The thabeit, or begging-pot, worn suspended round the neck by a cord. It is shaped like a large circular soup-tureen with a rounded bottom, and has no lid. This must be carried round every morning to receive the alms of the pious.

5. The kaban, a leathern girdle used for binding on the kowut.

6. The pèkot, a short-handled axe used for splitting firewood and the like.

7. An at, or needle.

8. A yesit, a strainer, or water dipper, an apparatus for filtering the water which he drinks, so that he may not, even unwittingly, take animal life.

To these pareik-kaya shit-ba, these sacred eight utensils, is usually added an awana or yap, a lotus-leaf-shaped fan, made from a single palm frond, with an edging of bamboo or light wood, and furnished with a handle fashioned like the letter S. The leaf used is that of the Talapat palm, hence the name of Talapoins given to the members of the brotherhood by the early Portuguese adventurers in Burma. Every mendicant must have this fan with him when he goes to an assemblage where there are likely to be women present, in order that he may be thus able to shut himself off from any temptation to carnal thoughts. The sight of half a

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[293] dozen or more solemn-visaged monks sitting on their mats and coyly hiding their faces behind these big fans is apt to raise a smile on the face of a foreigner. But there is no doubt that the regulation is well advised. Women are disturbers of tranquil meditation.

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561 When these necessaries have been provided, the candidate proceeds to the appointed building. This is always a thein, a consecrated hall, built of teak, with open sides and the sacred three, five, or seven overlapping and diminishing roofs, not unlike the Albert Memorial in appearance, but much larger at the base. Here the examining body is assembled to the number of ten or twelve, ordinarily, but a minimum of four will suffice if the ceremony is conducted in the jungle. The senior is appointed upyitsi, or president, and a secretary is nominated, whose duty it is to bring forward the candidate and to read the Kammawāsā, the ritual of ordination. This is the most gorgeously ornamented of all the Burmese books. It is written, not in the ordinary round character, but in square letters painted on with a thick black resinous gum, and requires a special education to read it. The leaves are formed either of the ordinary palm-leaf, thickly covered with red lacquer, and profusely ornamented round the border and between the lines with gilded figures of nats and elaborate scroll-work, or in the case of the more sacred monasteries, of the discarded waistcloths of kings. None might wear these pasos after the Great King of Righteousness had tired of them, and many were therefore made use of for this purpose. Portions of them are taken, doubled over, and then covered with numerous coatings of wood-oil and a paste composed of this same thitsi, with finely sifted burnt rice-husks, sawdust, and rice-water, until at last they become firm as a piece of cardboard, but vastly more pliant. Then the sheets are emblazoned, and the text painted on, the whole being enclosed between richly ornamented teak boards. Few more splendid-looking manuscripts can be seen anywhere. Occasionally copies are found engrossed on thin sheets of ivory or copper, but those on the royal pasos, called Wut-lè Kammawāsās, are most highly esteemed. The text is always read in a peculiar way, in a high-pitched, jerky recitative, which is not without a certain impressive effect.

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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The following detailed account of the ceremony of initiation is taken from the second volume of Bishop Bigandet's *Life of Gautama*, the bulk of it being a translation of the Kammawāsā :—

As soon as the pyin-sin have taken their places, the Kammawā-sayā (the secretary) introduces the novitiant duly clothed and bearing the necessary utensils. The candidate kneels down, and, with his hands raised to his forehead and his body bent, repeats three times :

"Venerable president, I acknowledge you to be my upyitsi."

The assistant, addressing himself to the candidate, says :

"Dost thou acknowledge this to be thy father, and these thy sacred vestments?"

The candidate audibly answers "Yes," and then withdraws to a distance of twelve cubits from the assembled fathers, whom the Kammawā-sayā addresses as follows :

"Venerable upyitsi, and you, brethren, here assembled, listen to my words. The candidate who now stands in a humble posture before you solicits from the upyitsi the favour of being honoured with the dignity of pyin-sin. If it appears to you that everything is properly arranged and disposed for this purpose, I will duly admonish him."

Then turning to the candidate he says :

"O candidate, be attentive to my words, and beware lest on this solemn occasion thou utterest an untruth, or concealest aught from our knowledge. Learn that there are certain incapacities and defects which render a person unfit for admission into our order. Moreover, when before the assembly thou art interrogated respecting such defects, thou art to answer truly and declare what incapacities thou mayest labour under. Now this is not the time to remain silent and decline thy head ; every member of the assembly has a right to interrogate thee at his pleasure, and it is thy bounden duty to return an answer to all his questions.

"Candidate! Art thou affected with leprosy or any such odious malady? Hast thou scrofula or any similar complaint? Dost thou suffer from asthma or cough? Art thou affected with those complaints which arise from a

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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corrupted blood? Art thou afflicted by madness or other ills caused by giants, witches, or the evil spirits of the forests or mountains?".

To each question the candidate answers—

"From such complaints and bodily disorders I am free."

The examination continues:

"Art thou a man?"

"I am."

"Art thou a true and legitimate son?"

"I am."

"Art thou involved in debts?"

"I am not."

"Art thou the bondman and underling of some great man?"

"I am not."

"Have thy parents given their consent to thy ordination?"

"They have."

"Hast thou reached the age of twenty years?"

"I have."

"Are thy vestments and sacred begging-bowl prepared?"

"They are."

"Candidate, what is thy name?"

"Wago (a vile and unworthy being)."

"What is the name of thy master?"

"His name is upyitsi."

The assistant then turns to the assembled yahans and says:

"Venerable upyitsi, and ye assembled brethren, be pleased to listen to my words. I have duly admonished this candidate who seeks from you admission to our order. Does the present moment appear to you a meet and a fit one for his admission? If so, I will order him to approach."

The fathers remaining silent, the assistant instructs the postulant to go close to the assembly and to ask that he may be received. The candidate approaches the assembly, and sitting before them in a respectful attitude, resting on his heels, raises his joined hands and says three times, "I beg, O fathers of this assembly, to be admitted as yahan. Have pity on me, take me from my present state of a layman, which is one of sin and imperfection, advance me to that of yahan, which is one of virtue and perfection."

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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The assistant then addresses the council and says:

"O ye fathers here assembled, hear my words. This candidate, humbly prostrated before you, begs of the upyitsi to be admitted among us; he is free from all defects, corporeal infirmities, and mental incapacities that would otherwise debar him from entering our holy state; he is provided with the patta and holy vestments, and he has duly asked the assembly in the name of the upyitsi for permission to be admitted. Now, therefore, let the assembled fathers complete his ordination. To whomsoever this seems good let him keep silence; whosoever thinks otherwise, let him declare that the candidate is unworthy of admission."

This he repeats thrice, and then continues:

"Since then none of the fathers object, but all are silent, which is a sign that all have consented, so therefore let it be done. Let this candidate pass out of the state of sin and imperfection into the perfect state of a yahan, and thus, by the consent of the upyitsi and all the fathers, let him be received."

The fathers must note down under what shade, on what day, at what hour, and in what season the candidate has been received.

The reader of the Kammawā, addressing the candidate, continues:

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"Let the candidate attend to the following account of the duties which are incumbent upon him, and to the faults which he must carefully avoid:—

"It is the duty of each member of our brotherhood to beg for his food with labour and with the exertion of the muscles of his feet, and through the whole course of his life he must gain his subsistence by the labour of his feet (he must not work with his hands, nor beg with his tongue). He is allowed to make use of all things that are offered to him in particular, or to the society in general, that are usually presented in banquets, that are sent by letter, and that are given on the new and full moon and at festivals. O candidate, all these things you may use for your food."

Candidate. "Sir, I understand what you tell me."

"It is a part of the duty of a member of our society to wear, through humility, yellow clothes made of rags thrown

2;Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

423 remain to the cultivator and his heirs. But he shall have a
671 tenth of the produce of all rice-lands, orchards, and gardens; and all excise and ferry duties, as well as canals and public works, shall belong to him. Through a succession of worlds the first king, the great Mahā Thamada, has established one-tenth to be his portion for ever, and let this be regarded as an everlasting precedent."

According to the Dhammathat there are seven methods by which landed property may be acquired. These are as follows:—1. By gift from the king. This is made only to soldiers and officials. 2. By inheritance. 3. By purchase. 4. By allotment from civil officers. 5. By personal reclaiming from the jungle. 6. By gift. 7. By unchallenged occupation for a period of ten years.

423 The first two titles are called perfect. The remainder
●561 are open to question, and may be disputed by any one who can show a prior claim. In actual fact, however, it may be said that the man who reclaims for himself a piece of land out of the jungle becomes by his industry proprietor of the clearing, without reference to local authorities, village elders, or any one at all, and has thereafter an inalienable right to his tenure, with no dues to pay whatever, except the sum the taikthugyi may see fit to assess him at. That worthy's valuation, however, always displayed an enthusiastic belief in the fertility of the soil. The landed proprietor could dispose of it by gift, or he might sell it; otherwise it descended to his heirs and assigns in the order of succession; the whole right and title was essentially vested in the owner and the heirs of his body. The tenure was, therefore, by what lawyers call fee-simple, udal, or allodial right. The estate left by the
[428] original occupier was seldom broken up. The heirs tilled parts of it, or gathered the whole crop in successive years; so that the land did not require to be split up into infinitesimal parts. This practice was rendered all the easier by the thinness of the population. It was open to any one at any time to carve for himself out of the forest a holding of his own, and thus there was no temptation to break up the original family acres. It is singular that under a rule so completely
423 despotic as that of Burma, where every man was the king's slave, and could not cross the borders without his permission,

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

III

SOCIAL GROUPS AND RELATIONS

In this section we describe the patterns of kinship and interpersonal relations, the beliefs and customs pertaining to the life cycle of the individual associations, and intergroup relations.*

Kinship

The kinship system reflects very clearly the bilateral family structure in the absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition at many points of relative age. For each generation a distinct set of kinship terms is employed. On the speaker's (ego's) generation, all cousins are merged with siblings, the terms being differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, the parents' siblings are differentiated according to the degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation the factor of relative age loses significance; sex is the sole basis of differentiation of kinship terms, except for separate terms to distinguish the speaker's own children from others. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a given generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

Relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of village social life revolves. Deference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying objects for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons.

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of Wasc (sometimes called the Buddhist 'Lent'), a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October; the New Year; and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received.

Interpersonal Relations

Husband and Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and the joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the traditional Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her husband's relatives. Where a married couple reside is a matter of choice and is decided very largely on the basis of economic opportunity. When there is such opportunity in the village for an outsider who marries a girl of Tadagale, he is urged to establish their residence there, but there is no particular pressure or feeling about the

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*The material on kinship and the life cycle, with certain changes, was published under the title "Burmese Kinship and the Life Cycle: an Outline" in Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol 7, no 4, 1951, pp. 437-454. The reader interested in the technical details of the kinship terms and a diagrammatic presentation of the kinship system is referred to that article. The author wishes to express his thanks to Mi Mi Khaing for valuable assistance in the compilation and analysis of the material on this aspect of the culture.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

562 sing, nor play, nor paint. It must never be forgotten
517 that their civilization is relatively a thousand years behind ours. Accomplishments are part of the polish that a civilization gives, and this they have not yet reached. Accomplishments are also the means to fill up time otherwise unoccupied; but very few Burmese girls have any time on their hands. There is no leisured class, and there are very few girls who have not to help, in one way or another, at the upkeep of the household.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling tells of a young lady who played the banjo. He has been more fortunate than myself, for I have never heard of such a person.
562 They have no accomplishments at all. House-
356 keeping they have not very much of. Houses are small, and households also are small; and there is very little furniture; and as the cooking is all the same, there is not much to learn in that way. I fear, too, that their houses could not compete as models of neatness with any other nation. Tidiness is one of the last gifts of civilization. We now pride ourselves on our order; we forget how very recent an accomplishment it is. To them it will come with the other gifts of age, for it must never be forgotten that they are a very young people—only children, big children—learning very slowly the lessons of experience and knowledge.

792 When they are between eight and fourteen years
561 of age the boys become monks for a time, as every
792 boy must, and they have a great festival at their
[562] entrance into the monastery. Girls do not enter
304 nunneries, but they, too, have a great feast in their
561 honour. They have their ears bored. It is a
562

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

304 561 562 festival for a girl of great importance, this ear-boring, and, according to the wealth of the parents, it is accompanied by pwès and other rejoicings.

A little girl, the daughter of a shopkeeper here in this town, had her ears bored the other day, and there were great rejoicings. There was a pwè open to all for three nights, and there were great quantities of food, and sweets, and many presents given away, and on the last night the river was illuminated. There was a boat anchored in mid-stream, and from this were launched myriads of tiny rafts, each with a little lamp on board. The lamps gleamed bright with golden light as they drifted on the bosom of the great water, a moving line of living fire. There were little boats, too, with the outlines marked with lamps, and there were pagodas and miniature houses all floating, floating down the river, till, in far distance by the promontory, the lamps flickered out one by one, and the river fell asleep again.

'There is only one great festival in a girl's life,' a woman told me. 'We try to make it as good as we can. Boys have many festivals, girls have but one. It is only just that it should be good.'

562 157 And so they grow up very quiet, very sedate, looking on the world about them with very clear eyes. It is strange, talking to Burmese girls, to see how much they know and understand of the world about them. It is to them no great mystery, full of unimaginable good and evil, but a world that they are learning to understand, and where good and evil are never unmixed. Men are to them neither angels nor devils, but just men, and so the world does not hold for them the disappointments, the disillusionings

Home in Lovis Road Refugee Camp

Since November 1949 U Myaing and his family have been living in the Lovis Road refugee camp, Rangoon. They had stopped at half a dozen places prior to their present abode, but their living had been on very much the same scale. The refugee camp is located about a mile north of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda on a hilly promontory. The area is not far from Tiger Alley (U Wisara Road) and along this road and others nearby, huts have been built up within the last few years, largely by war refugees. The buildings of the camp were earlier used as headquarters and barracks by the People's Volunteer Organisation (P.V.O.). The P.V.O. is an offshoot of the Burmese Patriot's Army following the end of the Second World War. It was originally an army, but after independence was converted into an "organisation" for political purposes. A Yellow Band and a White Band section developed, and the White P.V.O.s becoming insurgents.

The vital statistics of the camp as given by U Khant, the school master are as follows:- 269 families comprised of 856 adults (LU GYI), 211 young people (LU LAT), and 33 infants (MO SO) live in 15 huts . The number of families in each hut ranges from 9 in the smallest to 36 in the largest. The infant category includes those babies who are still breast feeding - up to one year of age. The adult category begins at the age of voting - 18 years. The proportion of the three categories as shown in the totals remains fairly consistent for each of the houses indicating that there are no special age-grade subdivisions. The refugees come for the most part from the Delta area of Lower Burma, from the districts of Pantanaw and Bassein but they have not organised themselves in their huts according to the district or village from which they come. The assignment of space has been on a pragmatic base according to who arrived at what time. The buildings consisted for the most part of rectangular huts measuring 30 feet by 10 feet with woven split bamboo walls and thatched roofs. When the area was converted into a refugee camp, each family was assigned a certain space which they then partitioned off. A map of the refugee camp area shows a haphazard plan. The only

285 H37 they were made by friends. Ma Aye Myaing and Daw Aw Zar appear to specialize in the larger mats such as used for sleeping. Mat making appears to be an occupation which in ordinary times is unimportant but it is relied heavily upon in bad times.

461 562 ●561 [277] 874 [294] The children are put to work around the house and in processing the fish at an early age. Just recently U Myaing's eldest daughter left school to learn a trade. She left one month ago from the fourth standard, to learn cheroot rolling. In another month's time she will have learnt how. She does not have to pay any fees - neither is she paid for her help. She lives with her aunt (U Myaing's sister) and has her meals there. Near their house there is also an embroidery shop which is owned by her aunt. At night U Myaing's daughter is taught embroidery and sewing by her aunt. The owner of the cheroot rolling shop is not a relative, but the women who work there are aunts and grand-aunts of the girl. When she has learnt the trade, then she will be paid between two and three rupees a day on piece work basis.

463 363 512 At present (May 1951) U Myaing is working as a sweeper in the Rangoon Municipality on a monthly wage of Rs. 80/-. There is an overseer placed over him every day. U Myaing's main job is to keep one street in town clean. He leaves his house at six and arrives at the overseer's by half past six and there a roll-call is taken of about a hundred of them. At seven he begins on his street and stops at about half-eight to go to answer the roll-call (see below for rest of schedule). He has personal contact only with the overseer, the doctor and the WUNDAUK (official). All three of them go around the town to see if they work hard enough. The WUNDAUK also comes everyday to witness the roll-call. "If we do not do good work we shall be dismissed. Everything is in their hands. But they do so after two or three warnings. We do not possess any rights at all. Sometimes offenders are sent to other streets that require harder labour. "

U Myaing's street is located in Myeni-gun, and he has to clean the street of dirt as well as clean the drains on either side.

His daily schedule at present is as follows: He rises at 4, washes his face and cleans his teeth, says his prayers and then has plain tea which Ma Aye Myaing has prepared for him. At six he leaves

recognised as over-stimulated by anxieties. "Don't talk my gall into disorder" is a common reaction to calamity tales. 158 753

The weather is important is maintaining health. Changeable weather as during the late part of the Monsoon season is generally unhealthy and gives rise to pulmonary disorders. One should provide head protection (through covering or shade from umbrella) from the sun's rays - which cause headaches by melting the brain. Colds come from getting wet in the rain resulting from the lack of sufficient bodily heat. MYEH HNGNE (earth-vapour) which rises as a steam in the early morning or after sudden rains is unhealthful in causing sore eyes and other inflamations. The"steam of the body" healthfully goes out in ordinary bathing and adds to one's comfort. Heat is a key factor in health and sickness being readily discerned as causes of local or general infection. The additional concept of "like producing like" helps explain the above beliefs. 753 132

The odor of AH HNYAW (fried-food) is especially dangerous to babies and persons in a weakened condition. When frying, which will create extensive fumes, is to be undertaken the cook must give warning to the neighbourhood so that susceptible ones can be protected. Such persons take refuge behind the thick, cloth mosquito nets. Many heated arguments take place in our servants' quarters when the Indian fried food fumes carry over to the Burmese apartments. It is observed that this danger applies peculiarly to the Burmese - Chinese are also exempt since they are seen to cook with babies strapped on their backs. [252] [186]

Parts of the body are cared for with special ingredients. The eyes are cleaned with pure water or coconut water. Oil is frequently dropped into the ears through a feather quill. The mouth and teeth are cleaned with salt. Bitter foods help keep the stomach fit. 515 751

Babies up to 1 year are fed on mother's milk or cow's milk. After one, rice chewed by the mother "to make it digestible" is added with some dried fish. After two, the child can chew its own rice, have a little meat, but no hot condiments. After five the child eats the same foods as the adults but is not allowed sour foods as this will "loosen the weight". After 16 or 17, this restriction is 853 561 262

561 removed. Old folks habitually like bitter foods - especially tea
262 leaves. Eating prepared foods left over night is strictly prohibited as a cause of illnesses. Curry must be eaten while it is hot. (There are no apparent reasons - just observation from eating spoiled
[757] foods). Boiled rice and fried dry fish comprises the standard sick diet in addition to other foods especially prescribed for the care or
177 for giving vigour. It is interesting to note that English foods such
757 as tinned biscuits ("Golden Puff biscuits") or milk preparations
262 ("Hollicks") are preferred for the sick diet by those who can afford them. The "strong" tastes of these foods give strength to the sick person. Lately, western medicines have been recognised as powerful. U Myaing's experiences above show the means by which this idea is established. However, the Burmese doctor is relied on even by families of the administrative class in Rangoon.

759 When a case of sickness seems beyond response to normal treatments, and it has been diagnosed as of a natural cause, the SAY SAYA (medicine-master) is called in. "Foot-hire" at a stiff rate of Rs.5/- for the first visit and 2 or 3 rupees for succeeding visits is paid for this service. "Say-saya, we place the case in your hands" is entoned, to which the doctor replies "If our faith coincides (i.e. patients and doctors) then we will be successful - otherwise we cannot go against Karma". The doctor notes the symptoms, feels forehead for fever, inquires of colour of urine and the course of the
[198] disorder. He then chants in verse the diagnosis as "eyes yellow, action irregular, forehead moist - (giving nature of sickness)". The treatment also follows in verse form as a rigid formula prescribing medicines and diet. The doctor is a specialist in one or more types of medicine which he has concocted such as "blood purifying
[755] medicines", "fever medicine", "purgative medicine", and he will have been called in because of this specialty. Charmed water is frequently given. Here verse formula is said over a cup of water to give it power.

SAY SAYA are trained when young men as apprentices to older doctors. The training includes memorising many books giving diagnosis and formulas for curing as well as learning the master's arts.

his lot. It also tends toward a kind of stratification of society where the boundaries, however, are neither sharp nor fast. Each person is comfortably installed in his place and competes, mildly, only with those of his own level. The obligations (as contributions for ceremonies) are in terms of one's ability, and his status is in terms of his virtues. Status is closely correlated with increasing age. This concept motivate the Burmese in the village within "KARMA groups". 181 156 364 555 [561] [554]

The unusual individual may transcend his family positions in exceptional cases - by marriage or achievement. Achievement by physical force has been a means of mobility in the past - there is the tradition of the strong man leader who comes from humble origins. Mobility by entrepreneur achievement (rice mill owners; traders) has been greatly stimulated with increased western contacts. U Myaing was a sort of entrepreneur in Pathwe. In Rangoon the opportunities are great and some Burmese are successfully embracing this, as yet, somewhat unfamiliar course. The western entrepreneur concept appears to be finding a fertile ground in the traditional "group individualism" of the Burmese. 156 555 557 [177]

The standards or levels of culture: When U Myaing's standard of living plummeted downwards as a refugee he became discontented and unhappy desiring to return to the "plateau" of his former level. At first he could only think of returning to Pathwe to achieve this, but as [illegible] begins to crown his efforts in Rangoon he now feels the beginnings of a sense of achievement. In his refugee situation there was no sense of shame for his reduction - the events contributing to his downfall were beyond his control, and he had lived "as a refugee should" in which his abilities and obligations were balanced. This resulted in an attitude of cheerful patience understandable in terms of the KARMA concept. 511 181 558

The two standards, in Pathwe and camp, represent balanced levels ranging from the "average" Burmese villages situation to close to the minimum. Higher standards than those of Pathwe are seen in the administrative class of Rangoon and other major towns where western influences are strong (car, western furniture and household utensils, westernised house and clothing, etc.). Lower standards may be 511 565 [177]

21: Htin Aung · E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

527 one, and each gives a special dance of its own.[1] At night, as part of the
796 celebrations, there is a feast of fools. Young men and boys roam the
530 village, throwing *zibyu* fruits at houses and stealing things, which will
174 be found in the centre of the village the next morning: the objects of the good-natured theft are mostly articles that would provoke laughter—such as a lady's under-skirt; or those which would cause temporary inconvenience in the morning—such as cooking utensils, steps from stairs, or a piece from the roof. The Feast of the New Year is one of mirth and foolery. It is known as the Water Festival because on that occasion, every Burman takes a delight in throwing water at his neighbour and getting soaked himself as the result of the other's counter-attack. The men derive great enjoyment from drenching the women, who in their turn are not slow to have their revenge. Young men group themselves and dance joyously along the streets, at times being chased by bands of elderly maiden ladies who lie in wait to catch the ringleaders. When caught, the youths are lightly bound with silken cords and their faces are blackened with soot. Then they are made to perform a monkey dance before being granted their release. The spirit of fun apparent in these Burmese feasts of foolery is akin to that which moved the young clerks of the *Parlement* of Paris and the members of the Inns of Court in London to stage their Feasts of Fools in medieval times.[2]

527 As the villagers lead a communal life and every joy and sorrow of a villager is shared by all others, a joyful event is celebrated by a
● [561] public feast. Marriage, birth, the admission of a son to his novitiate (for every Burmese boy enters priesthood for at least a week), and the piercing of the ear of a daughter are occasions for mirth and jollity. At these feasts they sing and dance and mimic, groups of villagers vie with each other for new methods of giving entertainment, and there
[241] is keen rivalry between youths and maidens. The most mirthful feast of all is the Harvest Feast in February, when the paddy has been reaped, and the village is ready to enjoy a well-earned rest of four after a working period of eight months.

527 These folk feasts are of great antiquity, though, because of the
796 essentially unchanging life in the villages, they continue to exist even at the present day. The Tazaungmôn and other Buddhist feasts

[1] The puppet show is described in a later chapter.

[2] Cf. E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, chap. xiii, 'The Feast of Fools'; also E. Welsford, *The Court Masque*, p. 2.

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

38. yauccá Husband (referential).
39. mù Husband's younger brother; husband's younger sister's husband. 601
40. khé?óu Elder sister's husband; husband's elder brother; husband's elder sister's husband.
41. yaummà Husband's sister; husband's brother's wife.

As may readily be seen by inspection of the charts, this kinship system reflects clearly the bilateral family structure, with an absence of terminological differentiation on the basis of the sex of the connecting relative. The other outstanding characteristic is the recognition of relative age at many points. For each generation a distinct set of terms is used. On ego's generation all cousins are merged with siblings; the terms are differentiated, however, according to relative age. In the first ascending generation, it will be noted, parents' siblings are terminologically distinguished according to degree of age relative to the parent. In the first descending generation, however, the factor of age loses significance; sex is the sole differentiating factor, apart from distinguishing terms for ego's own children. On successive descending generations sex distinction is absent and all relatives of a single generation are subsumed under a single kinship term.

Behaviorally as well as terminologically, relative age is the all-important hub upon which the wheel of Burmese social life revolves. Deference to one's elders is reflected in such customs as carrying things for them, refraining from sitting with one's head higher than those of elders, and avoiding postures in which the feet are extended towards such persons. 561 602 [516]

Beyond such matters of etiquette, the importance of age is even more fundamentally demonstrated in the showing of obeisance to one's elders. This is done on all the important ceremonial occasions. Four such occasions are regarded as obligatory times for paying one's respects. These are the beginning and the end of the Buddhist "Lent"—a period of about three months, roughly from mid-July to mid-October—the New Year, and the harvest. Respect is paid to all of one's elders in the parental generation and above. A visit is made at which an offering, valuable or symbolic, is brought and the elder's blessings are received. [

SOCIAL RELATIONS OF KIN

Husband–Wife. The household is normally composed of husband and wife and their offspring. It is a bilateral, limited type of family structure, contrasting markedly with the patrilineal extended Chinese family and joint family of India. Unlike the position of the wife in the Chinese and Indian family systems, that of the Burmese wife is not one of an outsider living in a group dominated by her 593 [592] [594]

[Text continues on page 442]

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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531]

next to a parent, with a life-long devotion.

Before or after the monastic novitiate, it is the custom for the Burman lads to have themselves tattooed from the waist to the knee (No. 152). Not to submit to this ordeal is to incur the reproach of cowardice. The tattooing is an intricate pattern of animals and tracery. Owing to the extent of surface involved, the process is most painful. It occupies days or weeks, according to the fortitude of the subject, who is drugged with opium for the occasion. The instrument has a handle weighted at the butt, and a long point of bronze, split like a ruling-pen. It is worked with great rapidity. The pigment is a kind of lamp-black of the consistence of ink. It shows bluish black through the brown skin. When a Burman tucks up his loin-cloth, as he always does for work or exercise (*kaddung-chaik*), he looks as if he had black knee-breeches. As plain as the contrast is to the eye, ordinary photographic plates fail to render it. In No. 153 it appears fully. On other parts of the body the men frequently have horoscopes and cabalistic diagrams tattooed with vermilion (*se-ni*, No. 162) for luck and bravado. The Shan practice of letting in gold and silver discs the size of two-penny pieces—beneath the skin—is sometimes imitated by Burmans as a charm against sword-cuts and bullets (*dâbyi*; *thenabbyi*). The Arakanese, who repudiate the custom of *thgwin*, ascribe it to a Burman King, who endeavoured to disguise his leprosy in this way.

27. VILLAGE LAY SCHOOL.

[276]
304
413
751
304
[609
101]
524

28. KITE-FLYING.

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

579
[623]

372. VILLAGE ELDERS IN CONCLAVE.

disperse as quickly as it was recruited or else it might develop into a band under a regular leader (*Bó*) and become the scourge of the country, rapidly attacking points separated by days' journeys. Against such bands the villagers combine and keep guard; torches are ready for night alarms. But when the brigands are too strong, the villagers have no choice but to enter into league with them and pay blackmail if they would not experience the horrors of barbarous war. At present brigandage is of very sporadic occurrence. Travellers are perfectly safe.

175
702
411

Throughout Burma every man was liable to serve in war. He would have his own sabre and pike and would be provided with musket and ammunition, but no further accoutrements. Latterly the king's body-guards wore a sort of uniform (No. 9). Cannon are mentioned as early as 1350, and a century later, matchlocks were in use. Cæsar Frederick in 1569 speaks of pikes and arquebuses and good cannon. When disbanded, the soldiers had to surrender their muskets, but numbers were smuggled away, to add to the rigour of the guerilla waged by brigands and the severity of the villagers' retaliation.

[579]

373. BURMAN OFFICIAL RECEIVING APPLICANTS.

[645]
[701]
[561]
622

The military leader is called *Bó*; the civil governor or minister of the king, *Wun*, which means a burden or trust. The former might be a young man, the latter but rarely so. Age and influence are almost synonymous in Burma. If the elders—headmen, *thâyi*—are agreed upon a thing, it is done. The village elders represent the fundamental substratum of government in Burma. They are consulted by the officials on matters affecting the people, whose natural, if unofficial,

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

443. PONDYIBYAN.

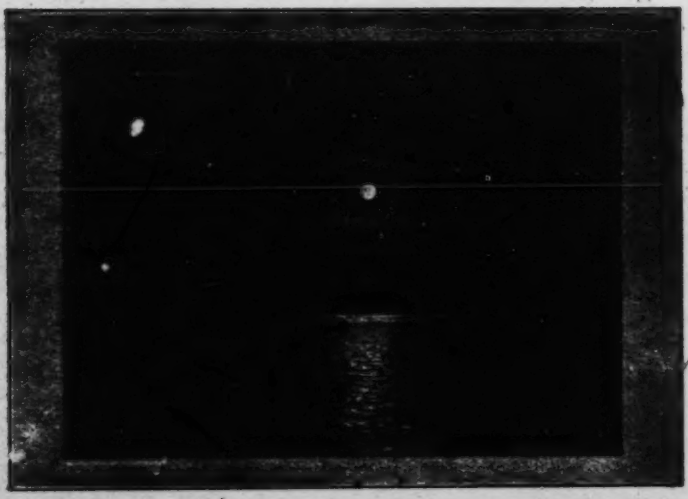
seers. If the idea be to conjure up the utmost possible contrast to the life of the man who is being honoured, the object could not be more completely attained. When the bier has reached the cemetery, the coffin is not set on a pyre like that of the layman, but is burned in the catafalque, for which purpose the latter has been filled with combustibles. The fire is not lighted in the common way; it is kindled from a distance by means of rockets. These are contributed by different villages or quarters of the town. Each of them backs their rocket for the honour of starting the fire. In Burma Proper the great rockets are sent through the air, guided by rattans to the catafalque. But it is one thing to reach and another to kindle. The Taláing rockets, with the trunks of hard trees, hooped with iron, for barrels, and mounted on stout carriages, are merely aimed at the catafalque. It frequently happens that none of them hits the mark; then the fire is kindled by hand. But the rocket that went nearest has won the day; great sums of money change hands, and as they return home, some people's spirits are higher than ever, while everybody else puts the best face upon it. *Tè pòndyi-byan kaung-dè*—, it was a glorious *pòndyi-byan*, and the *kyaungtagà* will be congratulated upon it as long as he lives. It is as though feelings held in life-long repression had regained the field and were asserting their sway over the passive embodiment of the restraining power. Extremes meet; and herein the secret may lie of the spell Buddhism exerts over Burma, in her serious mood.

446. CINERARIUM OF KING MINDON MIN.

The Burmans are wont to mark the course of life into five stages—first to get strength, then to get knowledge, then

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

561 family, then substance, then *Kôtha*. First the free and happy child living a life of nature. Then the schoolboy and student opening the stores of traditional wisdom. Then the gallant, absorbed in arts of pleasing; the escapade of marriage as the event frequently proves; the coming of family and settling down to work. Then the staid man of substance, precise in expression, versed in ancient lore and heard in the councils of the village conclave. Lastly, his ambitions satisfied, founder or co-founder of temple or school, he relinquishes his work to his children, and spends the evening of life in kindly intercourse, in study and devotion to his religion.



447. VALE1